



**THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF EMPOWERING
LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL HEADS AND TEACHER
DISPOSITIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CREATIVITY-
NURTURING BEHAVIOR AND FLEXIBILITY AMONG PUBLIC
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

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Abstract:

The main purpose of the study is to determine whether empowering leadership and teacher dispositions can mediate the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility among public elementary teachers. This quantitative, non-experimental correlational study examined the mediating effects of empowering leadership and teacher dispositions on the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility among 335 public elementary school teachers in Davao del Sur. Specifically, the big schools under Cluster 1, Cluster 2, Cluster 3, and Cluster 4 in Davao del Sur Division. Cluster sampling technique was used in the study, with statistical tools including mean, standard deviation, Pearson r, and path analysis. The findings on creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, empowering leadership, and teacher dispositions are very high. Moreover, there are significant relationships among creativity-nurturing behavior and empowering leadership; empowering leadership and flexibility; creativity-nurturing behavior and teacher dispositions; teacher dispositions and flexibility; and creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. Furthermore, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions resulted in no significant combined mediation of the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. The

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findings may contribute to the education of creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, empowering leadership, and teacher dispositions.

Keywords: creativity-nurturing behavior; flexibility; empowering leadership; teacher dispositions; mediation analysis; public elementary teachers; Philippines

1. Introduction

Teachers face workload problems, difficulties in digitalization, pressure and inadequacy, leading to low flexibility. These challenges were indications of poor teacher flexibility (Mangsat & Naparan, 2026). In a recent study by Beg *et al.* (2023), low teacher flexibility results in standardized teaching approaches that could create high expectations of teachers, produce issues of moral hazard among teachers, and generate concerns about teacher competency. Poor flexibility results in teachers being in a grade level they don't have interest in and being unaware that the students are behind. Moreover, Nwoko *et al.* (2023) emphasized that poor flexibility was associated with teacher well-being. Such findings emphasize the need for supportive measures to aid teacher flexibility and maintain well-being.

In terms of its significance, Lubke *et al.* (2021) concluded that teacher flexibility is linked to teachers' beliefs about students' academic achievement, their perceptions of the social advantages of inclusion, and their confidence in supporting students' social-skill development. Also, teacher flexibility is important in putting inclusive education into practice. Additionally, Galad *et al.* (2024) found that teacher flexibility responds to the demands of a digital society while enabling students to engage in personalized learning. Flexibility is significant in effectively addressing the differences in students' needs and skills.

Also, a previous study by Gunawan and Widodo (2021) found out that empowering leadership has a direct effect on creativity-nurturing behavior. The indicators of empowering leadership, namely building relationships, building communication, and reflecting the attitudes and values of the profession, can increase creativity-nurturing behavior. Relatedly, Alif and Nastiti (2022) in their study concluded that empowering leadership influences creativity-nurturing behavior. Empowering leadership contributes to better creativity-nurturing behavior at both the individual and organizational levels, as measured through job crafting and work behavior

The study by Manlangit and Atienzar (2023) emphasized that the teacher dispositions affect creativity-nurturing behavior. Teacher dispositions influence pedagogical choices of teaching strategies and creativity. In a similar study by Olabode and Oladokun (2021), teachers with high creativity-nurturing behavior also have high dispositions, which positively influence student academic achievement. The results of the aforementioned study show that creativity significantly predicts teachers' dispositions.

Moreover, a study by Clement (2022) found out that there is a link between flexibility and creativity-nurturing behavior. There is a need to develop programs and stimulate teacher flexibility and creative thinking at school. Similarly, a related study by Zydziunaite *et al.* (2022) highlighted that creativity-nurturing behavior is associated with flexibility, passion for work, professional independence, and intelligence in objectively assessing students' learning outcomes. This study concludes that teachers who are creative are enthusiastic, passionate and have more interest when in an environment of learning to do a performance like this.

Furthermore, Wortler *et al.* (2022) emphasized that empowering leadership can help teachers; this leadership approach encourages adaptability and independent action by cultivating organizational and self-leadership capabilities. Such a leadership style helps teachers remain effective in hybrid work environments. Additionally, the research of Vu (2020) emphasized that flexibility is positively associated with empowering leadership. Empowered leaders should create an environment that supports employees to do everything they want desirously and intentionally.

Further, in a related study by Guner and Gokce (2021), teacher disposition has a significant effect on flexibility. There are also interrelationships between teacher disposition, flexibility, anxiety, and achievement. Also, the findings of the study by Orakci and Khalili (2024) mentioned that there was a significant relationship between flexibility and teacher dispositions. Schools should establish a link of this kind to support the development of teacher-training courses. It should also include tasks for principals and individual teachers to complete with its assistance.

Also, Cortes (2023) found out that there was no significant relationship between empowering leadership styles and flexibility in the technological organization as perceived by employees, controlling for employee gender, job location, and tenure. There is a negative slope for empowering leadership and flexibility as a predictor of employee performance. Relatedly, empowering leadership does not improve flexibility. The insignificant association indicates that flexibility intrinsically enhances performance through creativity, frequently without empowering leadership intervention (Hassan *et al.*, 2024).

Although prior studies examined creativity, flexibility, empowerment, and dispositions separately, limited evidence is available regarding the combined mediating effects of empowering leadership and teacher dispositions on elementary school teachers in public schools in Davao del Sur. Zydziunaite *et al.* (2022) recommended that teacher leadership may be demonstrated through creative educational relationships with students, fellow teachers, school administrators, and the broader school community. Also, a preceding study by Manlangit and Atienzar (2023) suggested further research to implement strategies that foster creativity and enhance teachers' learning about creativity, with primary emphasis placed on the creative process. Thus, the researcher is interested in discovering the significance of the mediating effects of empowering leadership and teacher dispositions to have it related to the notion of creativity and

flexibility. Moreover, this study could raise some concerns for those who belong to the study and intend to benefit and have plans for how this can be put forward or improved. Creativity, flexibility, empowering leadership, and teacher dispositions. Thus, researchers need to pursue this study.

The purpose of the study is to determine whether empowering leadership and teacher dispositions can significantly mediate the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. Hence, it sought to answer the following questions. First, to determine the level of creativity-nurturing behavior in terms of independence, integration, motivation, judgement, flexibility, evaluation, questioning, opportunities and frustrations. Second, to determine the level of flexibility in terms of cognitive rigidity and attention to detail. Third, to assess the level of empowering leadership. Fourth, to describe the level of teacher dispositions. Fifth, to find out the significance of the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility, creativity-nurturing behavior and empowering leadership, empowering leadership and flexibility, creativity-nurturing behavior and teacher dispositions, and teacher dispositions and flexibility. Sixth, find out the significance of the mediating effects of empowering leadership and teacher dispositions on the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility.

2. Literature Review

This section includes various relevant readings from the related literature. They include different kinds of books, journals, articles, internet sources, and authors that are related to the research work carried out at present. The researcher focuses on creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, teacher dispositions and empowering leadership. Teacher creativity includes creating an innovative learning process in the classroom to enrich the objectives to be achieved, encouraging reasonable risks, and reinforcing creative activities. Teachers who showcase creativity can apply their thoughts and show a positive attitude towards their work. Further, teacher creativity improves learning by strengthening motivation and fostering joy. By enhancing the enjoyment of learning, creativity can result in joy and promote constructive integration among students (Ruth *et al.*, 2021; Ucar, 2022).

The concept of self-efficacy has gradually increased in the body of research in school psychology due to the implication of the concept on effective training, instructional process and students' academic results. Many studies confirmed that teachers with high self-efficacy feel satisfied with working conditions, experience less stress and have less trouble in managing student misconduct. Moreover, Bhandari and Maharjan's (2022) research underscores the significant influence of the working environment on teachers' job satisfaction. A positive work environment—marked by comfortable workspaces, sufficient resources, and supportive colleagues—contributes significantly to job satisfaction and enhances teachers' productivity, thereby benefiting overall school performance and outcomes.

Furthermore, Akiba *et al.* (2023) argued that while society acknowledges the pivotal role of teachers in shaping future generations, teachers' perceptions of their societal worth vary significantly across different countries. Societal values emphasize the importance of professionalism, continuous development, and accountability within the teaching profession. This is crucial because, as highlighted by Abidin *et al.* (2024) in their study, teachers significantly influence students' motivation and potential for academic success. Educators play a critical role in fostering students' motivation levels and overall success. Supportive and inspiring teachers can positively enhance students' learning experiences, thereby improving educational outcomes. Thus, maintaining a balanced interaction among teachers, the school environment, and evaluation is essential.

Flexibility can switch attention between thoughts and different behavioral plans to adapt to a dynamic world. Those sufficiently flexible can cope well with difficulty, think divergently and brainstorm new ideas. These capacities give people room to take ownership, interpret meaning, be entrepreneurial and be interested in their surroundings, which reduces fear in their social context. It is positively associated with emotions such as happiness, creativity, and academic achievement (Rizi & Rostami, 2023; Tanhan *et al.*, 2023).

Cognitive rigidity is defined as an inability to adapt to new or changing information, environments, or perspectives. It involves a fixed mindset that resists change even when presented with new evidence. The study's analysis of psychological experiments shows that individuals with higher cognitive rigidity are less receptive to information or perspectives that contradict their pre-existing views. Azarova *et al.* (2021) further describe cognitive rigidity as manifesting in various forms, including perceptual rigidity, fixed attitudes, and fixed functionality, all of which impede creative problem-solving and innovative thinking. Researchers categorize cognitive rigidity into affective, motivational, and cognitive aspects, emphasizing resistance to changes in behavior and perception. This rigidity is characterized by an attachment to specific boundaries, which limits the ability to explore new perspectives and solutions.

Attention to detail, as defined by Stevenor *et al.* (2022), is the ability to focus on and accurately perceive small or specific aspects of a task or situation. It involves being thorough, meticulous, and precise in observing, analyzing, and completing tasks. Individuals with close attention to detail tend to excel in roles that require careful observation, organization, and problem-solving. This skill is essential in various fields such as quality control, research, design, and data analysis where precision and accuracy are crucial. Cognitive rigidity is also linked to excessive attention to detail. The inflexibility in thinking can lead to heightened focus on details and a tendency to get stuck on specific thoughts or behavior. The more rigid someone's cognitive processes are, the more likely they are to fixate on specific details and have challenges in shifting their attention away from them.

In the study by Wang (2023), empowering leadership is shown to enhance employees' performance, contributing to organizational sustainability. It helps in

developing employees' skills and capabilities by providing them with opportunities for growth, learning, and decision-making, which can lead to improved performance outcomes. Additionally, Reid *et al.* (2022) noted in their study that the idea of teacher empowerment initially emerged in the late 1980s as a response to the introduction of reform initiatives in schools and to school improvement efforts. Further research and inquiry by scholars of teacher empowerment continued to explore teacher empowerment, which proves it is a determinant factor for school success and that teacher empowerment correlates positively with job satisfaction.

In the study by Tore and Uzon (2024) entitled “The Effect of Empowering Leadership Characteristics of School Principals According to Teachers' Perceptions on Teachers' Psychological Ownership and Work Engagement”, it was found out that there was a significant relationship between the empowering leadership of the school principals and the teachers' psychological ownership, highlighting the importance of leadership behaviors in fostering a sense of ownership among teachers. The findings of the study also suggested that leadership styles could impact teachers' level of engagement at work. Furthermore, Aliazas *et al.* (2023) highlight the importance of person-organization fit in influencing teachers' work engagement and motivation. Empowering leadership practices, which involve creating a work environment where teachers align well with the organization and their workgroup, are essential for boosting teacher motivation and engagement. Leaders who promote a positive fit between individuals and their organization or workgroup can significantly enhance teachers' when it come to the levels of motivation and engagement.

In a study by Behura and Naznin (2021), teacher disposition refers to the beliefs, values, and ethical principles that guide teachers in their professional practice. It includes technical aspects like subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, as well as non-technical qualities such as virtues and personality. These dispositions are essential for successful and effective teaching, influencing how teachers interact with students and impart knowledge. It has been demonstrated by Yang (2022) that there are significant differences in thinking dispositions based on factors like gender, age, educational background, majors, identities, teaching experience and professional titles. To improve teacher dispositions, Yang suggests interventions like altering the traditional leadership roles of teachers, creating teaching resources that enhance thinking skills, and providing theoretical training on thinking ability.

In another study by Hoang *et al.* (2021), teacher education programs need to take a comprehensive approach to developing teacher dispositions. Early assessment and reinforcement of positive dispositions toward collaboration are essential. This prepares future teachers to meet the demands of 21st-century classrooms and create environments that encourage student collaboration, critical thinking, and effective use of technology. Teacher dispositions are important as the volitional elements that translate knowledge and skills into action. Therefore, it is essential for teacher candidates to understand and recognize the impact of their behavior on school organization and, more importantly, on

student learning. Dispositions should be nurtured throughout teacher education curricula, addressing them in both formal and informal settings. Additionally, top teaching positions highlight attributes such as enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment. Newly qualified teachers should exhibit these qualities in their professional conduct.

3. Material and Methods

The population consisted of 2,572 public elementary teachers from four clusters in the Division of Davao del Sur. Using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator, 335 teachers were selected as respondents. The specific school names were withheld for confidentiality; however, they represented the four identified clusters. A sample size of 270-385 participants, at a confidence level of 90%-95%, was needed, as determined by the Raosoft (2025) sample size calculator. This study utilized cluster sampling, a probability sampling method wherein the entire population is divided into separate groups, or clusters. It was used when there was a large population and sample. The cluster serves as a small-scale representation of the total population and covers the characteristics of the entire population. These clusters were based on a geographical area and by grouping individuals into a single cluster (Simkus, 2023).

The elementary teachers in public who are working for the academic year 2005-2006 and have stayed in their teaching assignment for at least 2 years were included. Elementary teachers who have reached plantilla status with the Department of Education were the right persons to provide answers to test the study's hypothesis. Private teachers not working at the elementary level and also public teachers teaching different elementary levels in different school assignments were excluded because they were working in a different school environment and under different supervision. Teachers in junior and senior high schools, as well as those teaching in private schools and managerial teachers, were excluded even in other branches as well.

The respondents were selected to answer the questionnaire voluntarily. The target of this research questionnaire was free to opt out and not participate in the survey. No one was compelled to answer the questionnaire and was asked to submit it to the researcher for automatic disposal. Moreover, respondents may stop their participation in the research at any time if they felt unsafe or were not comfortable with the research, and they had the freedom to do so without any consequence or penalty. The participants may withdraw at any point without giving a reason, and their partial data will not be used if they request withdrawal. The participation or answers of the participants did not affect their recruitment, employment, ranking or evaluation, as the activity was a researcher-led, not a supervisor-led, endeavor. This is purely a requirement for the completion of the master's study.

The survey questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first part measured creativity-nurturing behavior, while the succeeding parts measured flexibility, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions. To ensure content validity, a panel of

experts reviewed the questionnaire to confirm that the items effectively measured the intended constructs. Further, to assess its reliability, the research instrument was analyzed through pilot testing, and the values indicate excellent internal consistency for all scales. The independent variable, creativity-nurturing behavior was measured using the survey instrument developed by Century by Apak *et al.* (2021), entitled “Measuring Teacher Creativity-Nurturing Behavior and Readiness for 21st Century”. It had nine indicators, namely independence, integration, motivation, judgment, flexibility, evaluation, question, opportunities and frustrations, with a total of 27 items, and Cronbach’s alpha results revealed 0.986.

The dependent variable, flexibility, was measured using the adapted questionnaire from the study of Roberts *et al.* (2011), entitled “Development and Validation of the Detail and Flexibility Questionnaire (DFlex) in eating disorders which included two indicators, namely cognitive rigidity and attention to detail, and had a total of 24 items, with Cronbach’s alpha results revealing 0.986. The mediating variable, empowering leadership, was measured using a Vecchio *et al.* (2010) adapted survey questionnaire in this part, entitled “An examination of mediating mechanisms within a hierarchical structure”, which had a total of 10 items, with Cronbach’s alpha results revealing 0.983. In addition, the second mediating variable, teacher dispositions, used a West *et al.* (2018) adapted survey questionnaire, entitled “Teacher Disposition Scale (TDS): Construction and psychometric validation”; it had a total of 26 items, with Cronbach’s alpha results revealing 0.995.

A five-point Likert scale was employed to assess creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, empowering leadership, and teacher dispositions, using five ordered gradations along with their corresponding ranges of means and descriptions. The 4.20–5.00 range (Very High) was interpreted as always manifested; 3.40–4.19 (High), as often manifested; 2.60–3.39 (Moderate), as sometimes manifested; 1.80–2.59 (Low), as seldom manifested; and 1.00–1.79 (Very Low), as not manifested at all. The duration of the study was from October 2024 to December 2025.

The initial preparation of the data-gathering tool was presented to the research adviser for correction, suggestions and recommendations on ways to elevate its appearance by way of corrections incorporating. The research data-gathering tool in final format was then presented to a panel of evaluators for refinement/ modification. The original format of the test after incorporating all valid comments and suggestions from the experts who validated it before data gathering of samples. The total mean of the validity results from the experts is 4.5, which is described as Very High.

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive correlational design, measuring variables and determining the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility, with empowering leadership and teacher disposition as mediating variables among public elementary school teachers. A descriptive research design was used as a method to analyze a particular phenomenon in which the characteristics of a certain occurrence were identified through observation

(Creswell, 2017). Also, Bhandari (2023), this approach allowed researchers to find patterns and averages and test causal relationships. Moreover, correlational design is a non-experimental approach that employs statistical analysis to explore the relationship between two variables (Bhandari, 2023). Hence, it examines the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions and the utilization of the Survey questionnaire as an instrument for collecting data, the core data.

Furthermore, this study measured the direct effects of creativity-nurturing behavior on empowering leadership and the direct effects of creativity-nurturing behavior on teacher disposition, while examining the direct effects of flexibility on empowering leadership and teacher disposition through the mediating variables. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of how empowering leadership and teacher disposition mediate the link between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility among teachers in public elementary schools.

The statistical tools employed to interpret and analyze the data included the use of the mean, which was applied to assess levels of creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions. The Pearson r was conducted to ascertain whether there is a significant relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions. The role of mediating role of empowering leadership and teacher dispositions on the link between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility of public elementary school teachers was examined using path analysis. Path analysis is a multiple regression (statistical procedure) for testing causality models, examining causal effects among variables using multiple regressions with standardized variables, wherein path coefficients are tested for significance by coefficient (Chaitanya & Tevari, 2024).

Furthermore, a mediation analysis was employed in this paper. Mediation analysis is a type of analysis that attempts to identify and articulate the mechanism or process through which a relationship between an independent variable (creativity-nurturing behavior) and a dependent variable (flexibility) occurs via the incorporation of a third explanatory variable as a mediator variable: empowerment leadership and teacher dispositions. The mediator variable helps determine the type of relationship. Mediation analysis offers a set of ways to verify assumptions needed in setting the causal status of a mediator (Chi *et al.*, 2022).

The following procedures were conducted for the study: after the approval of the panel members, a formal permission letter was requested from the Dean, Professional Schools of the University of Mindanao; then it was addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent of Davao del Sur for a favorable endorsement to the school principals for the conduct of the survey. Subsequently, the researcher sent copies of the letters to the School Heads of the 4 major schools under the 4 clusters, asking permission to conduct the study.

Upon approval, the survey questionnaire was also administered to the respondents under the four (4) identified major schools of the four (4) clusters under the Division of Davao del Sur. Moreover, prior to the distribution of the survey questionnaire for data gathering, the researcher obtained and secured a Certificate of Approval from the UMERB (UMERC # 2025-417), ensuring compliance with some ethical considerations used in the study. Moreover, for proper processing of the questionnaire data, the researcher considered the face-to-face method of data collection. Before questionnaire distribution, the researcher explained the purpose, risks, benefits, confidentiality provisions, and voluntary nature of participation. The informed consent form was given and signed before the respondents answered the questionnaire. After the questionnaires were retrieved, the data were compiled and organized into tables, and the Statistician applied the appropriate statistical tools to generate the necessary data for interpretation and subsequent analysis. On the basis of the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations were developed.

The study was conducted with ethical considerations even prior to the actual gathering of data. In order to ensure the privacy of the participants, voluntary participation and anonymity were prioritized in the contribution of the participants to collect data. In accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, as a researcher, the collected information is protected to ensure privacy and used for the current research project. Informed consent to participate was requested from all public elementary teachers who acted as participants in this study. At no point did the study involve any risk to jeopardize the well-being and experience of the participants. To prevent instances of plagiarism during the research process, plagiarism detection tools such as Plagiarism Detector, Grammarly and/or Turnitin software. Since the researcher was not a relative of those study participants, there was no conflict of interest in this study. Dishonesty was non-existent in this study. Official permission was obtained from the schools where the participants teach or work. The data collection methods were conducted face-to-face for data gathering. This paper may only be published or presented by the researcher or the adviser with the researcher's permission. The adviser becomes a co-author of the study for the purposes of its publication. The study proceeded only after securing UMERB Compliance Certification and permissions from the appropriate DepEd and school authorities.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Creativity-Nurturing Behavior

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Independence	0.67	4.15	High
Integration	0.45	4.53	Very High
Motivation	0.52	4.50	Very High
Judgment	0.63	4.15	High
Flexibility	0.52	4.25	Very High

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Evaluation	0.68	4.02	High
Question	0.51	4.33	Very High
Opportunities	0.56	4.34	Very High
Frustration	0.54	4.40	Very High
Overall	0.28	4.30	Very High

The level of creativity- nurturing behavior was measured with nine indicators: independence, integration, motivation, judgement, flexibility, evaluation, questioning, opportunities, and frustration. It can be inferred that the overall mean of creativity-nurturing behavior was 4.30; it indicates that creativity-nurturing behavior was consistently present. Thus, it was always manifested. Moreover, the standard deviation of creativity-nurturing behavior ranged from 0.28 to 0.68, indicating consistent and homogeneous responses across indicators.

The indicator *integration* resulted in the highest mean score of all indicators, at 4.53; generally, six indicators were also indicated as very high. This illustrates that teachers make sure that their students have opportunities to share ideas in class. This is demonstrated by Ruth *et al.*, 2021; Ucar, 2022, wherein teacher creativity includes creating an innovative learning process in the classroom to enrich the objectives to be achieved, encouraging reasonable risks, and reinforcing creative activities. Teachers who showcase creativity can apply their thoughts and show a positive attitude towards their work. Creativity can make learning more fun, leading to joy and positive integration in students.

Furthermore, the *evaluation* showed the lowest mean score of 4.02, indicating it was often manifested. This suggests that teachers assumed that their students already look for the correctness of their own work rather than seeking it from the teacher, thereby corroborating Abidin *et al.*, 2024; Akiba *et al.*, 2023. This was crucial because teachers significantly influence students' motivation and potential for academic success. So, supportive and inspiring teachers can positively enhance students' learning experiences, thereby improving educational outcomes.

Table 2: Flexibility

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Cognitive rigidity	0.41	4.38	Very High
Attention to detail	0.42	4.30	Very High
Overall	0.36	4.34	Very High

The level of flexibility was measured by two indicators: cognitive rigidity and attention to detail. It can be gleaned that the overall mean for flexibility was 4.34, and it is described as very high, which means it was always manifested. Moreover, the standard deviation of flexibility ranged from 0.36 to 0.42, indicating consistent and homogeneous responses across indicators.

The indicator *cognitive rigidity* demonstrates a very high level, with a category mean of 4.38, indicating that teachers always practice respect when people do things in

their own way. The result was aligned with Azarova *et al.*'s (2021) study, which found that individuals with higher cognitive rigidity are less receptive to information or perspectives that contradict their pre-existing views. This rigidity is characterized by an attachment to specific boundaries, which limits the ability to explore new perspectives and solutions.

Furthermore, *attention to detail* obtained the lowest mean among the indicators, with a category mean of 4.30, showing that it was always manifested. It emphasized that the teachers remain focused on the small details and the real sense of an assignment. The result was consistent with Stevenor *et al.*, 2022, who emphasized that individuals with close attention to detail tend to excel in roles that require careful observation, organization, and problem-solving. This skill is essential in various fields such as quality control, research, design, and data analysis where precision and accuracy are crucial. The more rigid someone's cognitive processes are, the more likely they are to fixate on specific details and have challenges in shifting their attention away from them.

Table 3: Empowering Leadership

Items	SD	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Encouraging me to find solutions to my problems without his/her direct input.	0.68	4.24	Very High
Urging me to assume responsibilities on my own.	0.70	4.27	Very High
Advising me to solve problems when they pop up without always getting a stamp of approval.	0.67	4.16	High
Encouraging me to search for solutions without supervision.	0.64	4.11	High
Urging me to think of problems as opportunities rather than obstacles.	0.65	4.21	Very High
Advising me to look for the opportunities in the problems I face.	0.65	4.22	Very High
Encouraging me to view unsuccessful performance as a chance to learn.	0.62	4.19	High
Urging me to work as a team with the other teachers who work at the school.	0.68	4.26	Very High
Encouraging me to work together with other teachers who work at the school.	0.59	4.33	Very High
Advising me to coordinate my efforts with the other teachers who work at the school	0.57	4.27	Very High
Overall	0.48	4.23	Very High

Table 3 presents the level of empowering leadership, measured using the items. It can be inferred that empowering leadership was very high and was always manifested with a mean score of 4.23. It can be noted that the standard deviation of the items of empowering leadership ranged from 0.48 to 0.70, indicating that the response was consistent and homogeneous across indicators. Moreover, item 9, *encouraging me to work together with other teachers who work at the school*, yielded the highest mean of 4.33, and it was described

as very high, which illustrates that the teachers who encourage working together reflect an important aspect of empowering leadership.

Then, item 4, *encouraging me to search for solutions without supervision*, resulted in the lowest mean score of 4.11, denoting that it was often manifested. This means that teachers were encouraged to explore solutions to problems independently, without constant supervision. The result is aligned with Wang (2023, who mentioned that high empowering leadership makes teachers feel empowered, provides opportunities for professional growth, is effective and efficient in the classroom and is an effective agent of change toward students and the overall school environment.

Table 4: Teacher Dispositions

Items	SD	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Treating everyone fairly and equitably.	0.53	4.55	Very High
Showing passion for teaching.	0.53	4.54	Very High
Demonstrating passion and responsibility for students' learning.	0.59	4.44	Very High
Understanding their role and responsibilities in the school.	0.56	4.48	Very High
Demonstrating a commitment to students' learning.	0.54	4.44	Very High
Considering and employing a variety of effective teaching strategies.	0.53	4.37	Very High
Approaching the teaching profession with adequate preparation.	0.56	4.26	Very High
Demonstrating strong overall teacher professionalism at all times inside the school context.	0.58	4.41	Very High
Engaging all students to participate inclusively in communications and collaborations.	0.59	4.39	Very High
Displaying genuine empathy, warmth and compassion for students.	0.55	4.33	Very High
Engaging in effective classroom management strategies.	0.53	4.38	Very High
Appreciating students' individual differences.	0.55	4.51	Very High
Fostering students' self-directed learning.	0.57	4.43	Very High
Seeking support and advice from others.	0.57	4.36	Very High
Incorporating professional learning and feedback into practice.	0.53	4.35	Very High
Having high expectations of students.	0.62	4.21	Very High
Showing a commitment to teaching.	0.54	4.48	Very High
Demonstrating strong overall teacher professionalism at all times outside the school context.	0.57	4.44	Very High
Foreseeing the need to differentiate for diverse students.	0.65	4.35	Very High
Demonstrating ongoing effective collaboration with whole school community.	0.57	4.38	Very High
Engaging in effective problem-solving strategies.	0.61	4.29	Very High
Possessing strong verbal communication skills (speaking and listening).	0.61	4.17	High
Engaging in reflective practices of pedagogy.	0.60	4.29	Very High
Showing a willingness to facilitate extracurricular activities.	0.61	4.37	Very High
Possessing strong written communication skills.	0.57	4.21	Very High
Possessing strong non-verbal communication skills.	0.57	4.20	Very High
Overall	0.42	4.37	Very High

The level of teacher dispositions was measured by the items. It can be gleaned that the overall mean of teacher dispositions was 4.37 and is described as very high, which means it was consistently manifested. Moreover, the standard deviation of teacher dispositions ranged from 0.53 to 0.65, indicating consistent and homogeneous responses across indicators. In addition, item 1, *treating everyone fairly and equitably and showing a passion for teaching*, garnered the highest mean score of 4.55 and was evaluated as very high (always manifested). The very high mean score shows that when teachers show genuine enthusiasm in the teaching and learning process, it provides equal opportunities and respectful treatment toward teaching.

However, item 22, *possessing strong verbal communication skills (speaking and listening)*, got the lowest mean score of 4.17 but still high, suggesting that it was often manifested. The result is consistent with Behura & Naznin (2021), who highlighted that teacher dispositions impact student learning and motivation. The most effective teacher dispositions for student learning include empathy, authenticity, and meaningful purpose. Through positive teacher dispositions, students learn and develop, and school heads focus on education systems. These dispositions are essential for successful and effective teaching, influencing how teachers interact with students and impart knowledge.

Table 5: Significance of the Relationship between
 Creativity-Nurturing Behavior and Empowering Leadership

Creativity-Nurturing Behavior	Empowering Leadership
	Overall
Independence	.139* .011
Integration	.051 .351
Motivation	.177** .001
Judgment	.085 .119
Flexibility	.091 .096
Evaluation	.053 .333
Question	.134* .014
Opportunities	.123* .024
Frustration	.142** .009
Overall	.226** .000

Furthermore, it can be observed from Table 5 the finding in assessing significance in the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and empowering leadership. Based on the information indicated in Table 5, the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and the dimensions of empowering leadership resulted in an r-value of 0.226 and a p-value of 0.000, which was lower than the significance level of 0.05.

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that there was a significant relationship between Creativity-nurturing behavior and Empowering Leadership, and consequently the null hypothesis and the one stating that there was no significant relationship between Creativity-Nurturing behavior and Empowering Leadership are rejected. It indicated that Creativity-nurturing behavior has a positive impact on Empowering Leadership.

An analysis of the correlation between measures demonstrated that there was a strong relationship between creativity-nurturing leadership and empowering leadership. The result of the study is consistent with Alif & Nastiti (2022) and Gunawan & Widodo (2021), wherein empowering leadership has a direct effect on creativity. The indicators of empowering leadership, namely building relationships, building communication, and reflecting the attitudes and values of the profession, can increase creativity. Empowering leadership also influences creativity-nurturing behavior, as it contributes to better creativity at the Individual and Organizational Level, such as through job crafting and work behavior.

Table 6: The Significance of the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Flexibility

Empowering Leadership	Flexibility		
	Cognitive Rigidity	Attention to detail	Overall
Overall	.117*	.071	.110*
	.032	.196	.045

Also, Table 6 shows the results regarding the significance tests between empowering leadership and flexibility. From the table, it was shown that when relating empowering leadership to the instruments of flexibility, the r-value for the sample resulted in 0.110, with a p-value of 0.045, which was below the 0.05 significance level.

The study's findings revealed that empowering leadership was positively related to flexibility. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between empowering leadership and flexibility was rejected. This demonstrates that enabling leadership has a positive relationship with flexibility.

The relationship between the Measures obtained shows that a significant association exists between flexibility and empowering leadership. The results were consistent with Wortler *et al.* (2022), who mentioned that empowering leadership facilitates teachers' flexibility and self-organization because empowerment helps foster organizational skills and self-leadership skills. Such a leadership style helps teachers maintain their effectiveness in blended working contexts. Flexibility is also positively

associated with empowering leadership, as empowered leaders create an environment that supports employees to do everything they want desirously and intentionally.

Table 7: Significance of the Relationship between
 Creativity-Nurturing Behavior and Teacher Dispositions

Creativity-Nurturing Behavior	Teacher Dispositions
	Overall
Independence	.047 .386
Integration	.121* .026
Motivation	.228** .000
Judgment	.155** .004
Flexibility	.136* .013
Evaluation	.143** .009
Question	.200** .000
Opportunities	.141** .010
Frustration	.032 .555
Overall	.270** .000

Table 7 shows the analysis and findings to evaluate the strength and significance of the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and teacher dispositions. As shown in Table 7, when creativity-nurturing behavior was related to teacher dispositions, the r-value was 0.270 with a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the result of this study shows that a relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and teacher dispositions was significant. The hypothesis which had been tested namely that creativity- nurturing behaviour has no relation to teacher dispositions was rejected. This implies that creativity-nurturing behavior has a positive association with teacher dispositions.

There was a significant relationship between the measures, that there was an association between creativity-nurturing behavior and teacher dispositions. So, the result of the study is coherent with Manlangit & Atienzar, 2023; Olabode & Oladokun, 2021, who emphasized that teacher dispositions affect creativity-nurturing behavior. Teacher dispositions influence pedagogical choices of teaching strategies and creativity. Teachers with high creativity-nurturing behavior also have high dispositions, which positively influence student academic achievement.

Table 8: Significance of the Relationship between Teacher Dispositions and Flexibility

Teacher Dispositions	Flexibility		
	Cognitive Rigidity	Attention to detail	Overall
Overall	.292**	.116*	.240**
	.000	.033	.000

In addition, it can be illustrated from Table 8 the significance of the correlation between teacher dispositions and flexibility. It can be viewed from the table that a correlation was tested and found between teacher dispositions and every measure of flexibility, with an overall r-value of 0.240 and a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 significance level.

There was a significant relationship between teacher dispositions and flexibility. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there was no significant relationship between teacher dispositions and flexibility was rejected, and it was deduced that teacher dispositions were significantly and positively related to flexibility.

The correlation between measures revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher dispositions and flexibility. The result of the study is associated with Guner & Gokce, 2021; Orakci & Khalili, 2024, who mentioned that teacher disposition has a significant effect on flexibility. There are also interrelationships between teacher disposition, flexibility, anxiety, and achievement. There is also a significant relationship between flexibility and teacher dispositions, wherein schools can use this link to design teacher-training courses with specific tasks for school heads as well as for teachers.

Table 9: Significance of the Relationship between Creativity-Nurturing Behavior and Flexibility

Creativity-Nurturing Behavior	Flexibility		
	Cognitive Rigidity	Attention to detail	Overall
Independence	.042	.098	.081
	.446	.075	.137
Integration	.071	.016	.052
	.195	.773	.346
Motivation	.096	.077	.101
	.080	.161	.065
Judgment	.103	.077	.105
	.059	.158	.054
Flexibility	.069	.119*	.110*
	.207	.030	.044
Evaluation	.097	-.004	.054
	.075	.937	.325
Question	.189**	.210**	.234**
	.000	.000	.000
Opportunities	.109*	.025	.078
	.046	.653	.156
Frustration	.049	.034	.048
	.369	.533	.381
Overall	.186**	.144**	.193**

	.001	.008	.000
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More important to mention was that, in Table 9, the level of significance of the relation between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. From the table, it can be read that, relating creativity-nurturing behavior to the measures of flexibility, the r-value is 0.193 and the p-value is 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05.

The results indicated a significant correlation between creativity- nurturing behavior and flexibility. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, creativity-nurturing behavior was found to have a significant relationship with Flexibility.

The correlation between measures revealed that there is a significant relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. The result of the study is consistent with Clement (2022) and Zydziunaite *et al.* (2022, who highlighted that there is a link between flexibility and creativity. There is a need to develop programs and stimulate teacher flexibility and creative thinking at school. Creativity-nurturing behavior is also associated with flexibility, passion for work, professional independence, and intelligence in objectively assessing students' learning outcomes.

Table 10: The Mediating Effect: Path Analysis (Significant Combined No Mediation)

Path	Estimates		SE	C.R.	P
	Unstandardized	Standardized			
CR → EL	.393	.226	.093	4.232	***
CR → TD	.414	.270	.081	5.118	***
EL → FL	.024	.033	.040	.604	.546
TD → FL	.171	.133	.072	2.375	.018
CR → FL	.165	.196	.046	3.589	***

Once linear regression analysis was conducted on the data, the medgraphs were produced. The mediation analysis, which was established by Baron and Kenny (1986) pertains to the mediating effect of a variable on the correlation between two other variables.

Mediating effect analysis was also conducted with five of the paths, where the variables of the third and fourth are considered as the Mediator. Table 10 shows the steps conducted, in the category of Path 1 to Path 5. It can be gleaned from the table that the direct effect from creativity-nurturing behavior to empowering leadership is prominent across Path 1, mediator 1 (MV1). Through Path 2, creative nurturing behavior has a substantial direct relationship with teacher dispositions (mediator 2/ MV2). On the other hand, Path 3 presents empowering leadership, mediator 1 (MV1), towards flexibility, the dependent variable. In Path 4, teacher dispositions, mediator 2 (MV2), show a direct effect towards flexibility. Lastly, Path 5 presents the significant direct effect of creativity-nurturing behavior on flexibility. Additionally, mediation analysis using MedGraph needs to be conducted in order to assess the significance of the mediating effect, as paths 1, 2, 4, and 5 are found to be correlated. Full mediation was achieved if the effect of the

independent variable on the dependent variable failed to be statistically significant. This implied that the mediator variable is the mediating variable for all effects.

More importantly, for the regression coefficient, it substantially decreased in the last step and remained significant; only partial mediation was attained. This suggests that a portion of flexibility is mediated by empowering leadership and teacher dispositions, while other components are either directly influenced or indirectly affected by factors not involved in the paradigm. Path 3, the influence of empowering leadership on flexibility, was found to be not significant. With this, no significant combined mediation occurred, as the effect was found to be not significant ($p > 0.05$).

The available path results suggest no combined mediation because one mediator path was not significant; however, indirect-effect estimates would strengthen the mediation conclusion. This suggests that creativity-nurturing behavior may influence teacher flexibility directly rather than through the combined mediating mechanisms of empowering leadership and teacher dispositions.

The purpose of the study was to contribute to the literature focused on the mediating variable in the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. Also, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions were investigated as possible mediating variables that could explain the effect of creativity-nurturing behavior on flexibility. Moreover, the study found that there was no mediation result when the variables were combined, although a significant direct effect was presented, which may help in the enrichment of the existing studies on creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. This implies that the effect of creativity-nurturing behavior on flexibility is not heightened through empowering leadership and teacher dispositions.

This is aligned with Cortes (2023) and Hassan *et al.* (2024), affirming that there was no significant relationship between empowering leadership and flexibility. There is no statistically significant relationship between empowering leadership style and flexibility in a technological organization as perceived by employees, controlling for employee gender, job location, and tenure. There is a negative slope for empowering leadership and flexibility as a predictor of employee performance. Lastly, empowering leadership does not improve flexibility. The insignificant association indicates that flexibility intrinsically enhances performance through creativity, frequently without empowering leadership intervention.

5. Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations for this study. On the very high ratings of all four variables (creativity-nurturing behavior, flexibility, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions), the researcher may suggest that schools continue to utilize their best practices in teaching strategies, behavior and engagement with fellow teachers and most especially with the students and remain open to different opinions in the workplace. School heads may become more

compassionate and humane in their dealings with teachers by showing more sincere concern for the affective being of an individual.

In light of the very high level of creativity-nurturing behavior, it is recommended that there may be regular conduct of consultation periods so that students can open up whatever they have in mind. The conduct of monthly or bi-monthly recognition of student awardees for best achievement obtained either academically or in extracurricular activities. Furthermore, it is recommended that the involvement of parents is needed in matters concerning students (their children) to ensure that whatever the class or students in school are doing/engaged with, the parents are aware and may always show their support to all the activities in school, which may include attending to meetings, joining community outreaches and sponsoring relevant school projects.

Moreover, it is recommended that school heads should concentrate on efforts to improve communication strategies within the teaching team. School heads should develop a culture of open and transparent communication, such as through regular team meetings, forums or workshops on effective communication skills. Training in active listening, how to give positive feedback, and conflict resolution can further enhance interpersonal relationships among teachers. Building a unified and collaborative team is facilitated by creating a climate where educators feel comfortable sharing ideas and concerns. Teachers can facilitate learners' self-assessment through reflection journals, peer review, rubrics and lead checking activities by the students.

Also, school heads might want to seek feedback from teachers to identify communication challenges and design interventions accordingly. The improved communication among the teaching team can have a positive effect on the overall effectiveness of the team and contribute to a more productive and harmonious work environment. Quarterly one-on-one dialogue, focus group discussions and sensitivity sessions may be held to enable assessment of the individual capacities of teachers and staff in the performance of their functions.

The results on the very high level of flexibility, the researcher may recommend that the schools continue to establish the good rapport which is existing in the school. This may include a review or revisit of some school rules and policies affecting the school, the teachers and students as well. If some policies are amenable to change, orientation and reorientation may be facilitated as part of the dissemination of information. It is also recommended that teachers are encouraged to intentionally develop and use this immersive focus for more satisfaction and effectiveness at work. Schools could do activities on prioritizing tasks, reflective planning and balancing attention to detail and big-picture goals. Teachers can increase their ability to concentrate deeply by integrating mindfulness techniques and time-management strategies into their routines.

Additionally, it is recommended that teachers take periodic breaks and engage in stress-reducing activities during the workday to foster flexibility, which can help establish a healthy balance between immersive focus and overall well-being. 3. Conduct stress management seminars, spiritual activities, team-building sessions and R and R

activities for all concerned once a year. This could build stronger relationships and a greater sense of camaraderie among school staff. After all, they are the people behind the success of the school. The realization of the school's vision, mission and goals will all depend on how school management is sensitive to the needs of the teachers and students.

On the very high level of empowering leadership, the researcher suggests that the Department of Education may continue to implement targeted training programs and professional development opportunities for school heads and teachers focusing on skills and strategies in challenging the process. School heads and teachers can still be provided with leadership competencies via the DepEd School Head Development Program (SHDP) and the Personal and Professional Standard for School Heads Program (PPSSH). The school heads could also gradually pass on decision-making tasks and create safe spaces for teachers to solve classroom problems on their own. Workshops, seminars or coaching sessions should be held periodically to increase their capacity to initiate change, promote innovation and creative problem-solving within the school environment. Specifically, these may include supervisory development workshops or seminars, organizational leadership training, communication enhancement programs, IT-based teaching strategies, counseling, and other related activities designed to strengthen leadership skills and promote responsibility for maintaining the quality performance of schools.

Additionally, the Department of Education could integrate these elements into leadership competency frameworks and performance assessment systems to support continuous improvement. Addressing this area will enable educational leaders to foster a more dynamic and adaptable school culture, thereby improving overall school performance and organizational effectiveness.

Teacher dispositions, as a mediating variable, received a very high mean rating. Therefore, the researcher recommends that schools continue fostering the positive relationships already established within the school community. This may involve reviewing or revisiting existing school rules and policies that affect the school, teachers, and students. If policy changes are implemented, orientation and reorientation sessions should be conducted to ensure effective information dissemination and understanding. Schools may regularly conduct consultation sessions to provide teachers with opportunities to express their concerns, ideas, and perspectives. They may also recognize deserving teachers through monthly awards for notable achievements and accomplishments in their teaching practice. Furthermore, school administrators should respect teachers' academic freedom and carefully consider their views before taking any significant action regarding issues involving teachers or teacher-student relationships.

School administrators may regularly conduct quarterly seminars on team building and collaboration, as well as orientations and reorientations on the school's vision, mission, and goals. Leadership development, interpersonal skills, and other capacity-building programs may also be offered to help staff grow professionally, become empowered, and serve as positive role models for their students. In addition, schools

could organize communication workshops, peer-coaching activities, demonstration teaching, and professional learning sessions that emphasize effective speaking and listening skills. Teachers should also be given consistent opportunities to participate in planning, problem-solving, decision-making, and trust-building activities. Such initiatives can strengthen their commitment, increase motivation, and encourage them to remain in the teaching profession.

Future researchers may examine additional mediating variables that could further explain how empowering leadership and teacher dispositions mediate the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and teacher flexibility. They may also conduct quantitative studies involving larger populations and apply Structural Equation Modeling as the research design. Potential mediators for investigation include teacher self-efficacy, psychological empowerment, professional learning culture, instructional autonomy, and school climate. Moreover, future studies could adopt a mixed-methods approach by combining quantitative and qualitative methods to develop a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences and perceptions, as well as to assess the effects of effective practices implemented in schools.

6. Conclusion

The Creativity-nurturing Behavior among public elementary teachers is very high, indicating it is always manifested. It implies that measurement of creativity-nurturing behavior was consistently observed. The flexibility is very high, indicating it is always manifested. It implies that individuals with higher cognitive rigidity are less receptive to information, and teachers remain focused on the small and in the real sense of an assignment. The empowering leadership is very high, which means it is always manifested. It suggests that teachers who encourage working together reflect an important aspect of empowering leadership. The teacher dispositions are very high, indicating it is always manifested. It implies that when teachers show genuine enthusiasm in the teaching and learning process, it provides equal opportunities and respectful treatment toward teaching.

In addition, a significant relationship exists between creativity-nurturing behavior and empowering leadership, empowering leadership and flexibility, creativity-nurturing behavior and teacher dispositions, teacher dispositions and flexibility, and creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. Finally, empowering leadership and teacher dispositions have no significant joint mediation on the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility.

The findings show that empowering leadership and teacher dispositions have no significant joint mediation of the relationship between creativity-nurturing behavior and flexibility. The findings did not fully support the assumed mediating mechanism proposed in the conceptual model. The Flexibility Theory by Spiro, Coulson, Feltovich and Anderson (1988), as cited by Truffa (2026), suggests that seeing multiple

representations of the same content or phenomenon helps teachers develop mental scaffolding necessary for considering new applications of their knowledge in new situations. The findings of the study also negate the Blind-Variation and Selective-Retention Creativity Theory by Campbell (1960) as cited by Simonton (2022), the Activation Theory by Scott (1966) as cited by Chiang *et al.* (2022) and the Thinking Dispositions Theory by Perkins, Jay and Thishman (1993) as cited by Prabhakar *et al.* (2023).

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to lift this piece of work to our Almighty Father, the source of life, wisdom and everything, for bestowing His love upon us and enlightenment. This would then be the perfect time to thank all the research experts of the University who contributed a lot to the completion of this paper in terms of inspiration, insights, and wisdom.

To Dr. Lyndon A. Quines, her adviser, for his precious time and valuable suggestions, knowledge and professional guidance shared for the realization of this study. To the panel of examiners chaired by Dr. Reita C. Palma and the members, Dr. Elizabeth M. Malonzo, Dr. Rinante L. Genuba and Dr. Lorna T. General, for their constant support and encouragement to finish this study.

To the officers of the Department of Education, particularly the Division Superintendent, Davao del Sur and School Principals, for giving permission to conduct the study and to all the respondent elementary teachers of Bansalan, Padada, Sulop, and Sta. Cruz who actively participated in the data gathering.

Most especially to my family: Papa Jonathan, Mama Jocelyn and brother Kenneth for their never-ending love, care, understanding and support financially, morally and spiritually. To my JSMFC family, for their inspiration and unlimited support through prayers and words of encouragement extended to the researcher.

Finally, to the one above all, the Omnipresent God, thank you so much.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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